Whitman College Faculty Mentoring

April 2, 2010

Mission Statement

In order to support faculty as they work to meet the criteria for contract renewal, tenure and promotion, the Whitman College Faculty Mentoring Program seeks to match faculty members at all ranks who desire a faculty mentor, with tenured faculty members whose institutional experience may offer clarification to the process. While the program is initially and specifically targeted toward untenured, tenure-track faculty members, it may extend to non tenure-track and post-tenure faculty members if the need is demonstrated and mentors are available. The mentorship program is not intended to replace departmental mentorship that should routinely be extended to new faculty. Instead the program offers supplemental and confidential mentorship from outside the faculty's department.

The Faculty Mentoring Program is instituted with the primary goal of helping untenured faculty who desire a mentor navigate pre-tenure years. The following list of additional goals, while extensive, is by no means exhaustive. Depending on the individuals involved in the mentor-mentee relationship, certain goals may not be applicable, while others might be devised to accomplish certain specific objectives by mutual agreement.

Goals

- Create a self-sustaining program wherein individuals who have engaged in successful and productive relationships as mentees during their pre-tenure years will, in their turn, become mentors.
- Foster collegiality and mutual respect.
- Ease the transition of untenured faculty into the Whitman College academic culture and the Walla Walla community by encouraging mentor-mentee conversations that:
    - Provide advice and strategies to faculty regarding various aspects of teaching including but not limited to: how to construct a syllabus; how to structure classes; or how to interpret student evaluations of courses.
    - Provide advice and strategies to faculty regarding career development including but not limited to: how to establish a research program; how to balance teaching

and research; or how to stay on target in professional development; how to assemble a review portfolio.

- Help faculty interpret letters of promotion, tenure or contract renewal.
- Offer faculty advice regarding the balance between teaching, professional development and service as well as the balance between professional obligations and personal life.
- Develop a sense of mutual belonging to the faculty, and a knowledge of and commitment to faculty self-governance.

Coordinator of Mentoring

The Coordinator of Mentoring will be selected through nominations (including self-nominations) collected from the faculty, and appointed by the Provost and Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), to whom the Coordinator will report. The term of appointment will be for three years with the possibility of renewal at the end of the term.

Any Whitman College professor at the rank of Associate or above qualifies for nomination as Coordinator of Mentoring. Training and/or continued education in mentoring trends for the Coordinator of Mentoring will be made accessible through funding from the Office of the Provost and Dean of Faculty where appropriate. An open line of communication should exist between the Coordinator of Mentoring and the Director of the CTL in order to coordinate the operations of the Mentoring program with those of the CTL.

The Coordinator of Mentoring will be responsible for selection of mentors from a pool of applicants after applicants have completed the Mentor Program Orientation and an interview with the Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the Coordinator of Mentoring to periodically assess the effectiveness of mentor-mentee pairings while maintaining strict confidentiality. This may be done through private meetings with the mentor or the mentee or in group meetings with the mentor-mentee pair, or through written feedback. The Coordinator of Mentoring may, upon mutual agreement between the mentee and mentor or upon specific request of the mentee, re-assign a mentee to a new mentor. The various duties and functions performed by the Coordinator of Mentoring should be considered as the Coordinator’s college service commitment.

Selection of Mentors

Mentors will be selected by the Coordinator of Mentoring from a group of tenured faculty member volunteers who have undergone the Mentor Program Orientation and participated in an interview conducted by the Coordinator. Matching of mentors and mentees will be based on mutual compatibility in qualities and qualifications as well as on the specific goals of the mentee and/or requests made by the mentor (for example, to be paired with mentees from within the mentor's division). Mentors shall be selected from outside the department of the mentee; mentors may, upon request of mentee, be selected from either inside or outside the mentee's division. Mentees may choose to change mentors as their needs change or as they approach new stages of their careers. Participation in the mentoring program requires a significant commitment of time and energy on the part of the mentor. As such, it should be considered an important part of the mentor's college service commitment.

Mentors should be prepared to:

- Be available and accessible on a regular basis and as specific issues of concern arise.
- Take a pro-active role in making sure that the mentee is progressing toward mutually agreed upon goals. This may require the mentor to take the lead in contacting the mentee.
- Participate in Mentoring Program events in order to stay abreast of new mentoring techniques and to share successes and difficulties with other mentors.
- Invite mentees to visit their own classroom in order to promote a dialog about teaching based on direct observation.
- Coordinate meetings in offices or other appropriate venues.
- Offer collegiality.

Mentees should be prepared to:

- Maintain open and honest communication with mentor regarding teaching, professional development, service, or any other aspect of a career at Whitman College.
- Take a pro-active role in inviting the mentor to attend and observe the mentee's classroom. Ask questions about the tenure and promotion process, the Faculty Handbook, the Faculty Code and the Personnel Committee Guidelines.

- Seek advice from either the Coordinator of Mentoring or the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of both the mentor and the mentee to maintain strict confidentiality on any issues discussed in mentor-mentee meetings, except in cases where mutual agreement has been reached regarding the need for outside consultation. For example, if the mentee is experiencing psychological or emotional issues that are beyond the scope of responsibility of the mentor, the mentor and mentee may agree that outside help is needed.

The expectation of confidentiality extends to communications between mentees, the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Coordinator of Mentoring.

Mentoring and review by the Personnel Committee

The mentoring program is intended to promote candid and constructive mentor-mentee relationships; therefore, this relationship should remain outside the formal review process. Mentors should not have any formal role in the evaluation process of a mentee until after the mentor-mentee relationship has ended, and shall not submit letters of candidate assessment until the mentee has passed through the next Personnel Committee review.

Additionally, the Coordinator of Mentoring and the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning shall not submit letters of candidate assessment for any mentee in the program during the period of their appointment and for a period of three years after the end of their appointment.

Program Assessment

The mentoring program will be assessed by the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning through regular meetings with the Coordinator of Mentoring. In addition, the program assessment may be done through conversations with mentees or mentors in group settings or through written feedback. The Provost and Dean of the Faculty may be asked to participate in such meetings. The mentoring program should be assessed periodically in conjunction with review of the Center for Teaching and Learning by qualified outside reviewers.